Photo attached of Luis Santibanez (1832-1927)

Hispanics that arrived to the Abilene area in the early 1880s, for the most part, came to work on the railroad. Luis Santibanez (1842-1927) was born in Mexico. As told by his grandson, longtime Abilene resident Fred Santibanez (1923-2011), Luis was captured by the French army and made to serve as a soldier. One night, while the French were distracted, Luis and another Mexican escaped. Luis was one of the first Texas and Pacific Railroad workers hired to complete sections of track in the Abilene area. The family lived in a T&P housing section in Baird. There were 20 sections in Baird because a railroad repair facility was located there. Fred's father was born in Baird and he worked for the T&P Railway for 35 years. The Santibanez family settled in the Abilene area and are considered early Hispanic pioneers.

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